UHR

Universities Human Resources

UHR Conference 2025

Online 13 - 15 May

#UHR25
#UHRawards25
#workwithUHR

Micro changes in communication empowering change

Sarah Hubbard, Advance HE

Our time together

+ Explore and refresh perspectives on language to empower change within your context

+ Invite new thinking around micro changes to language and communication

+ Build confidence to experiment with new approaches and practices to empowering change

AdvanceHE

It's ok…

+ For us to be ourselves
+ To look after our own needs first
+ To share curiosities and feelings, if we want to
+ To share different perspectives
+ To have fun
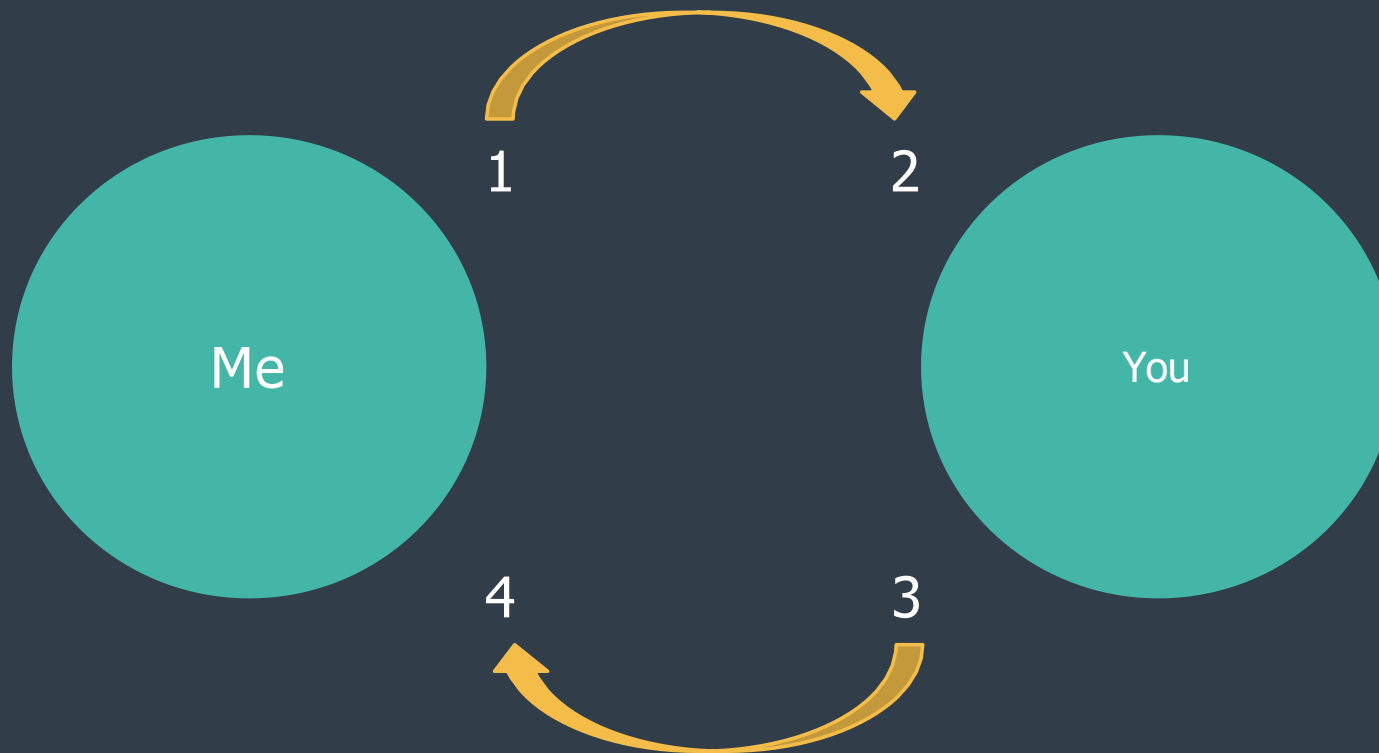+ To share learning outside of the room, not personal stories

Mentimeter

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+Menti.com
+5920 1312

Breaking down a transaction

Me

You

1

2

4

3

AdvanceHE

Lee, 2017

Guiding and Directing

Looking after People

Inspiring, well organised, firm **Structuring**

Accepting understanding compassionate **Nurturing**

+

+

Accounting

Assessing inner and outer current reality

alert aware

rational evaluative

+

+

Cooperative
Friendly, assertive, considerate

Spontaneous
Creative, zestful expressive

Relating to others

Expressing my own self

Temple, 1999

Questions

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Directing to Exploring

+ Directing
  + You need to implement the new absence reporting procedure immediately.
+ Exploring
  + What would help your department transition to the new absence reporting system?

Problem to possibility

+ Problem
  + Different departments are interpreting the new procedures inconsistently.
+ Possibility
  + The varied interpretations across departments highlight where we can co-create clearer guidance that works for everyone.

Language pattern shifts

But	➡	And
Why	➡	What
Passive	➡	Active
Abstract	➡	Concrete

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" **People don't resist change.**

They resist being changed!"

— **PETER SENGE**

Questions

E.g. Workload Allocation

The new workload model must be implemented by all departments starting next semester.

The model has been approved by SLT and is non-negotiable.

Departments failing to comply will impact their resource allocations.

Training sessions will be scheduled soon.

Revised approach

The new curriculum design creates an opportunity to reconsider how we recognise different types of academic contributions.

The workload model aims to provide greater transparency and equity across departments. We're committed to working with each department to understand your unique context and adapt implementation accordingly.

What specific aspects of the model would benefit from further discussion in your department's context?

E.g. Digitisation of HR processes

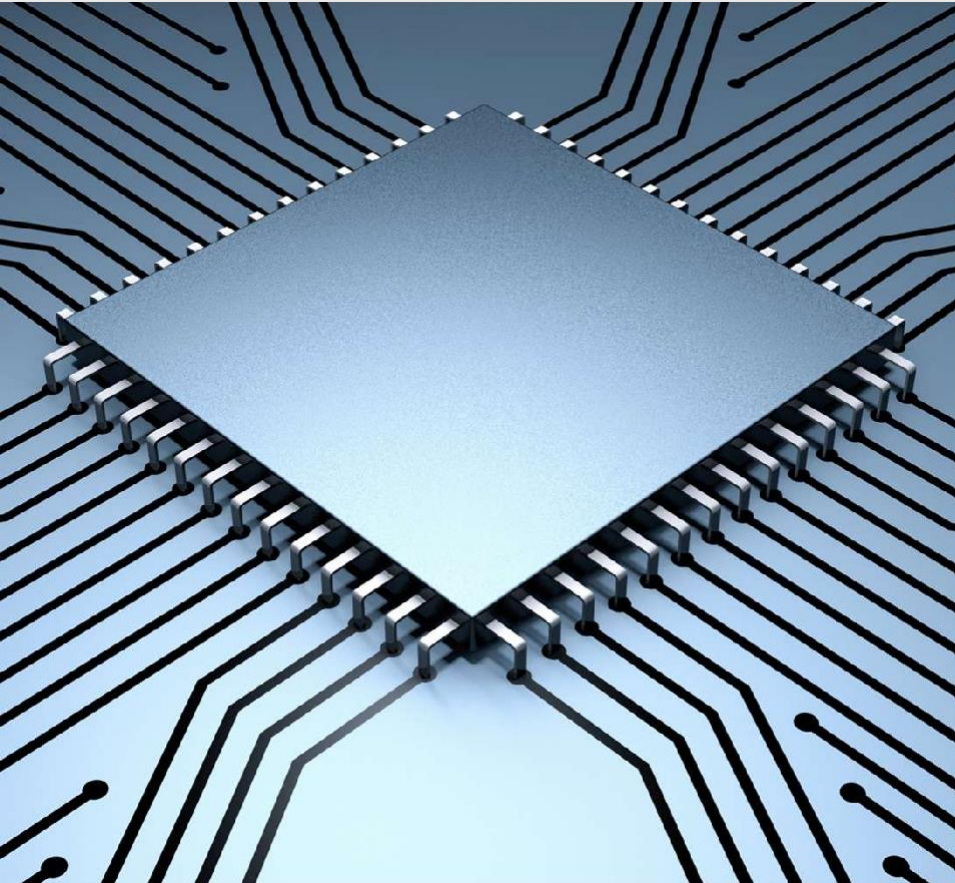The paper-based systems are inefficient and error-prone.

The digital system will be implemented next month.

Why are there still concerns about this transition when digital processes are standard practice elsewhere?

Staff must complete the online training modules before the go-live date

Revised approach

Your expertise in managing our current processes has been invaluable, and we want to build on this knowledge as we enhance our systems.

The digital platform will help reduce the administrative burden many of you have identified in our current processes.

We recognise learning new systems takes time and support. What specific aspects of the transition feel most challenging, and what additional resources would be helpful?

We've developed a graduated implementation timeline that allows for practice and adjustment

E.g. Flexible working

Due to their different roles, academic staff will have flexibility in their work arrangements, but professional services staff must maintain campus presence during core hours.

This policy has been benchmarked against sector standards.

Managers should ensure their teams understand these requirements.

Revised approach

Our new flexible working framework aims to balance the different requirements of various roles while maximising autonomy where possible.

We've developed principles that recognise both the unique aspects of academic work and the essential campus-based services that support our university community.

How might we implement these principles in ways that feel fair and workable across different teams?

We're particularly interested in exploring where greater flexibility might be possible for campus-based roles.

E.g. Well-being

The staff survey revealed unacceptable levels of stress.

Each department must nominate a well-being champion by next Friday.

Champions will need approximately 5% of their workload allocated to this role.

This initiative is necessary to address the survey findings.

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Revised approach

The insights you and your teams provided through the staff survey give us an opportunity to strengthen our community support systems.

Department well-being champions will serve as connectors between university-wide resources and local needs.

What factors would make it easier for your department to designate and support a team member in this role?

We're committed to ensuring champions have the time, resources, and influence to make a meaningful difference.

Questions

thank you

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